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# Managing Residential Waste

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Solid Waste Management Program technical bulletin

7/2003

This guidance is designed to inform homeowners about the alternatives they have available to manage their residential waste.

## What is Residential Waste?

Residential waste is solid waste produced by routine household activities, such as paper waste and garbage from daily activities. This does not include home remodeling wastes, wastes from home businesses, durable goods such as old appliances, carpets or furniture, tires or other non-routine household waste.

## Reducing Your Residential Waste

The three Rs of waste reduction are Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. Many households already practice the 3 Rs discussed below. We strongly encourage all Missourians to practice these.

### Reduce

Some tips for reducing waste at home are

- Buy products in bulk. Larger, economy-size products or those in concentrated form use less packaging and usually cost less per ounce. However, do not buy more than you will use or you will end up with waste product.
- Avoid over-packaged goods, especially those packaged with several different layers of materials such as foil, paper and plastic. This type of packaging is difficult to recycle, and you pay more for the package.
- Be aware of the amount of disposable items you use. Avoid "throwaways" such as paper plates, cups and napkins, and disposable razors and lighters whenever possible. These items add to your trash and they have to be continually replaced.
- Buy durable goods - ones that are well built or that carry good warranties. They will last longer, save money in the long run, reduce disposal costs and conserve landfill space.
- Remove your name from mailing lists of materials you do not wish to receive; write to Direct Marketing Association, Mail Preference Service, P.O. Box 9008, Farmingdale, NY 11735-9008.

### Reuse

It makes economic and environmental sense to reuse products. Creativity helps!

- Reuse items for their original purpose. Save and reuse bags and boxes. Repair toys, appliances, lamps, furniture and other household goods.



- Reuse products in different ways. Use a coffee can to pack a lunch; use plastic microwave dinner trays as picnic dishes and when camping.
- Sell old clothes, appliances, toys and furniture, or donate them to charities.
- Reuse plastic and paper grocery bags, or bring your own cloth bags to the store. Do not take a new bag from the store unless you need one.

## **Recycle**

Recycling is a multi-step process that begins with collecting used or discarded material and ends when a consumer buys a product made from recycled materials. To support the recycling loop:

- Check with collection centers and curbside pickup services to see what materials they accept for recycling, and divert these materials from your residential waste. Metals, newspapers, office paper, cardboard, glass, plastic containers and bags, waste oil and cloths are often recycled.
- Find out how the materials should be prepared such as removing lids from milk jugs and glass jars. Each recycler has a set of standards to meet in order to move the materials on to an end-user.
- Buy products made from recycled material. Look for the recycling symbol or ask store managers or salespeople. The recycling symbol either means the product is made of recycled material or the item is recyclable. Recycled products range from school and office supplies to building materials and clothing.

## **Residential Waste Disposal**

Even if the 3 Rs are conscientiously practiced, some waste will still be left to dispose of. Most Missouri households manage their residential waste by using trash collection services or by taking it themselves to a landfill or transfer station. Some rural areas offer a “green box” service, which provides a Dumpster near a centrally located county road for local residents to use. Green boxes are usually picked up or emptied once a week.

While the department encourages off-site waste disposal at permitted facilities, the Solid Waste Management Law does allow on-site disposal of solid waste provided the following criteria are met.

Solid waste disposed of on site:

- Must be the result of an individual's own residential activities (see Section A for the definition of residential waste) on property owned or lawfully occupied by him or her.
- Must not be disposed of in any surface water body or in an area where it could affect surface or ground water.
- Must not create a public nuisance or adversely affect the public health (e.g., attract insects, rodents or other vectors, blow or wash onto someone else's property, etc.).
- Must not be prohibited by local laws or ordinances.

It is against the law to dispose of your waste on someone else's property, or to allow someone else's waste to be disposed of on your property.

If you choose to dispose of your own waste on site, the department encourages you to bury the waste in an area away from any body of water, wetland or floodplain, cover the compacted waste with soil and vegetate the disturbed area.

In most rural areas, open burning of residential solid waste is allowed on the site where the waste was generated, provided it is not in violation of local laws or ordinances, or the laws and regulations of the Department of Natural Resources. Within certain areas of Kansas City (and contiguous municipalities), St. Louis and Springfield/Greene County open burning rules are regulated by city or county entities. If you live in these areas you should check with these local offices. Air regulations may also prohibit the open burning of residential waste generated by multi-family dwellings, such as apartment complexes and condominiums.

### **Can I Sell Property That Contains a Solid Waste Disposal Area?**

The Missouri Solid Waste Management Law (§260.213, RSMo) requires anyone selling, conveying or transferring property that contains a solid waste disposal site (whether buried or not), to disclose this information to a potential buyer early in the negotiation process.

### **What About Household Hazardous Waste?**

Almost every home contains household products that are hazardous, such as cleaning products, automotive products, paint and lawn and garden chemicals. These are considered household hazardous products that contain chemicals that can present acute or chronic hazards to human health and to the safety of people handling it. Some household hazardous products, like paints, varnishes and pesticides accumulate in the attic or basement for years. Make sure all old household hazardous products being stored are in a non-leaking container that is clearly labeled. When household hazardous products are not used completely and are discarded, they become household hazardous waste.

Under state and federal law, these materials are not excluded from on-site disposal with your other residential waste. However, we strongly urge you to look into other options for managing household hazardous waste. Some cities, counties and Solid Waste Management Districts operate permanent household hazardous waste collection centers.

You can avoid having household hazardous waste by buying non-toxic or less hazardous products or by using up items before they become outdated and by trying to find an alternate use for your excess materials. For example, a community theatre group or youth group may be able to use donated paint or varnish to decorate sets or for various projects, or a homeless shelter could use donated cleaning supplies or paint. If the above options are not utilized, you are encouraged to call the Technical Assistance Program (TAP) at 1-800-361-4827 for further information on methods for reuse, reduction and disposal of your household hazardous waste. Waste reduction publications available through TAP are listed at the end of this bulletin.

### **Where do I go for additional information?**

You may obtain more information about properly managing residential waste from the sources listed below.

- Department of Natural Resources' Regional Offices – for questions on solid waste, including questions about open burning.
 

Kansas City Regional Office	(816) 622-7000
Northeast Regional Office (Macon)	(660) 385-2129
St. Louis Regional Office at	(314) 416-2960
Southeast Regional Office (Poplar Bluff)	(573) 840-9750
Southwest Regional Office (Springfield)	(417) 891-4300
- Department of Natural Resources' Program Offices – for questions on solid waste, open burning or available technical bulletins and publications contact the respective program below.
 

Solid Waste Management Program (SWMP)	(573) 751-5401
Air Pollution Control Program (APCP)	(573) 751-4817
- Local Solid Waste Management Districts – for questions on where to dispose of various wastes. These district offices work with counties on waste management issues. A list of contacts and a map of the districts is available from the SWMP at [www.dnr.state.mo.us/deq/swmp](http://www.dnr.state.mo.us/deq/swmp) or the SWMP number listed above.

Environmental publications are also available at [www.dnr.mo.gov/oac/pubs.htm](http://www.dnr.mo.gov/oac/pubs.htm).

Examples of available publications:

- *Three R's: Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle* (pub 207)
- *Waste Reduction Tips for Households* (pub 200)
- *Waste Reduction Tips for Businesses* (pub 209)
- *Items Banned from Landfills and What To Do With Them* (pub 186)
- *Managing Construction and Demolition Waste* (pub 2045)
- *Management of Waste Tires* (pub 2056)
- *Fluorescent Lamp Technical Bulletin and Recyclers* (pub 24)
- *The Universal Waste Rule in Missouri* (pub 2058)

## For more information

Missouri Department of Natural Resources  
 Solid Waste Management Program  
 P.O. Box 176  
 Jefferson City, MO 65102-0176  
 1-800-361-4827 or (573) 751-5401 office  
 (573) 526-3902 fax  
[www.dnr.mo.gov/alpd/swmp](http://www.dnr.mo.gov/alpd/swmp)